

In The Old Days

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Summary: We all know the famous tale of how Hiccup trained a Night Fury, and brought down the Red Death with his friends by his side. But what kind of trouble did he get himself into in his younger years? Especially with a best friend like Astrid Hofferson.

1. A Terrorably close call

This is Berk. Normally it would seem hopeless and freezing, but today was actually a pleasant day. The weather was unusually warm and the cooks in the great hall actually didn't accidentally put rocks in the soup for once. Little Astrid Hofferson ran towards the woods with her braids bobbing. Odin knows how her mother tried to keep the hair from sticking out, but to no avail. Those blonde braids stayed put. Astrid dodged the villagers with their laundry, bread and chickens, yes chickens, while they shouted remarks such as "Slow down!" "Don't run with that axe!" and "Herald, stop holding the chicken that way!" Astrid didn't bother to call back an apology, or even listen, she didn't want to be late meeting her best friend.

Astrid was a blonde, icy blue eyed, pretty girl at the young age of four and was pretty intelligent for her age. She was also a slight bit smaller than the other Viking girls usually were at her age, but nobody really minded. This gave her the advantage of agility and anyone who got on Astrid's bad side knew she was stronger than she looked. She loved nothing more than fighting, and had always wanted an axe and was hoping to get one for her 5th birthday. Her parents were planning on getting her one, for she had the spark of a warrior in her eyes. She could take kids two years older than her down without as much as breaking a sweat. That's what Vikings call gifted.

Astrid ran to the clearing in the woods where she found her best friend waiting, sketching a flower that was in front of him. She cleared her throat and the boy jumped up and turned around. "Hi Hic." She said The boy relaxed and his eyes lit up. "Hey Astrid!" He

exclaimed. Hiccup was very un-vikinglike boy. He was thin and small and not very strong. He also had something those Vikings didn't, intelligence. The boy was four and was already reading and writing. He used words most Vikings wouldn't even try to spell, let alone understand. His auburn hair hung over his forest green eyes, which took in everything in sight. He probably knew everyone better than they knew themselves. Unfortunately, none of these traits really helped as far as Viking-ness went.

The two Vikings began to chatter excitedly. It was about random things, The new limb Gobber lost, the prank the Thorson twins played on Astrid's father earlier that week, the usual. As they talked, they walked deeper into the woods, dodging tree roots and fallen logs. They never worried about getting lost, Hiccup knew the woods like the back of his hand.

"You're crazy, a Skrill would totally win. It shoots out lightning! They're basically Thor dragons!" Astrid exclaimed. "Yes, but a Night Fury is lightning fast, the master of stealth, and never misses. Not to mention, they're smaller, so they're more agile. Like you and me." Hiccup countered calmly. "Well I â€" Astrid began but was cut off by a rustling noise in the foliage.

"What was that?" Hiccup asked, his voice shaky.

"I don't know, but I wanna find out!" Astrid replied with a gleam in her eye and took off running in the direction of the rustling.

"Astrid!" Hiccup yelled. He contemplated following her. He grimaced, shook head and took off runningâ€" in her direction.

When Hiccup finally caught up to Astrid, he was out of breath. "Well," He panted, "What made the sound?"

"I'm not sure." She responded. "It could have left."

All of the sudden, the adventurous duo heard rustling behind them. They both turned around and Astrid grabbed a fairly large stick for protection. Hiccup tried to do the same, but only managed to grab a thin twig.

There was silence. No movement. Neither Viking dared to breath. Then, without warning, a small patch of green scales popped up from behind the foliage, and shot a small fireball towards the two.

In all their Viking glory, the pair promptly dropped their "weapons", screamed, and ran in the direction of the village.

Later, the two would tell their parents, and the other Viking children, of their sighting of a dragon, and how they managed to avoid being burnt to a crisp. Adults who overheard the story more than once would swear the dragon got bigger every time the story was told.

2. Invention testing

It was a not so cold day on the Isle of Berk. The sun was shining, the birds were singing, and the rubble was smoldering. Which meant it

was a day after a raid. Clean up day.

If you were to look at the top of the hill, you would see a fairly decent sized house with a very Viking like man walking out. This was the house of Stoick the vast, the Chief of Berk. He would also seem to be speaking instructions such as "don't burn down anything," to someone inside. If you knew anything about said Chief of Berk, you would know exactly who he was talking to. Inside that house was the Chief's son, a very un-Vikingly Viking named Hiccup, who was now seven.

"Gobber said no working at the forge today, but he expects you to be in tomorrow. Got it? Good. I'll be back tonight." Stoick told his son before walking out the door and beginning his chiefly duties. "Bye." Hiccup said softly and waved. Normally he would respond with an "I'll be here," but that would be a lie. Not that Hiccup needed to stay in anyways. All kids were allowed free reign of the island, except for the forest, the kids were afraid of that place. Well, most of them anyways and, as always, Hiccup was not most Viking children.

Hiccup put his notebook, a few apples, and his charcoal pencil in his bag and began his trek to the forge to pick up his invention.

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><p>Hiccup snatched his invention from the top of his desk in the forge, put it in his bag, and started running to the forest to meet his best friend. He was about to reach the edge of the forest when a blue and yellow blur came flying at him and pushed him to the ground with a surprised squeal. He opened his eyes and saw a pair of icy blue ones right in front of him. "Whoops, sorry Hiccup," Apologized Astrid Hofferson, Hiccup's best friend. "It's ok" he replied, beginning to stand up "I'm used to it anyways." This was true. For the past couple of years, the other kids (namely Snotlout, Ruffnut and Tuffnut) had taken up teasing Hiccup and pushing him down any time they pass him as their favorite pastime. Aside from pranking that is. Astrid looked a bit angry. "They haven't been teasing you again have they?" Astrid inquired angrily. "Honestly Astrid, I don't really care anymore." Hiccup answered. This was a lie and Astrid knew it, her eyes grew fiery for a second before she replied with a simple "Okay" and changed the subject to the new invention the two would be testing as they walked to a clearing in the forest.<p>

"I got the idea from watching Gobber repair a crossbow." Hiccup informed his friend as they reached the clearing and pulled his invention out of his bag. It was a slingshot, and at the bottom of the handle was a platform like piece of wood so it could stand on its own. It also had a support that, if removed, could allow the slingshot to move to different angles.

"Hiccup, it just looks like a slingshot to me." Astrid said slightly disappointed. "Yes it is," responded Hiccup proudly, "but that's not all. Before I can show you the rest, try it out." She took the slingshot from his hand, grabbed a rock and shot it at the tree that had a target painted on it. Over the years, Hiccup and Astrid tested all of his inventions on that tree. They eventually just painted it so it could be an actual target. Astrid let the rock fly with such power that there was a rather decent sized dent in the tree after it was hit.

"Cool, now what else can it do?" Astrid asked eagerly. She really wanted to see the full usage of her friend's invention. Hiccup smiled, reached into his bag and pulled out a curved piece of wood. Hiccup removed the support that made the slingshot stand upright and attached the string to a notch on the side of the slingshot. He stuck the curved piece of wood onto the top and handed it to Astrid. She looked at it for a second and exclaimed "A table catapult!" Hiccup beamed and let her try it out.

It was the first invention of his that worked.

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><p>That evening at the great hall, Hiccup and Astrid excitedly showed Gobber Hiccup's invention. Gobber was actually surprised that it worked and to be honest, so were they. They were walking back to their own table when a leg popped out from nowhere and tripped Hiccup. There were some giggles and a cough of "Useless" that followed. Snotlout and the Twins, of course. Astrid's blood boiled but Hiccup just got up, brushed himself off, and led Astrid to their table before anyone got choked by a spoon at her hand.<p>

"Hiccup, can I see that invention of yours?" Astrid asked with her eyes focused on Snotlout and the Twins. He handed it to her cautiously. She set it to catapult mode. Later, three eight year olds would complain of flying vegetables and would be laughed at for their "Big imaginations."

3. Trolls are real

Gobber was beginning to get impatient. Usually HE was the one who showed up later, not his seven year old apprentice, Hiccup. Today especially, considering it was snowing and Gobber only had one leg while the kid had two. The snow was getting a bit thick though, and impatience grew to concern. The boy only weighed sixty pounds; he could get carried away by the wind easily. All these worries disappeared when the boy walked through the door, shivering slightly, face red from cold, and mouth open with an apology ready.

"SorryGobberIcouldn'tfindmysock!" Hiccup blurted out. It took a while for Gobber to understand what his young apprentice had just said. When he finally understood, he responded, "Your sock? Which one?"

Hiccup checked his foot and replied cautiously "The left oneâ€|"

"That's it then!" Gobber yelled excitedly making his young apprentice jump.

"What?" Hiccup questioned, still a bit shaken from the sudden outburst, and the cold.

"It was a troll!" Gobber replied in a how-dare-you-not-know-that voice. Hiccup wrinkled his nose. "Trolls? Dad said there's no such thing." Gobber rolled his eyes and said "Of course he did. He also said the Boneknapper wasn't real, but he obviously is, and so are trolls." Before the boy could reply, a feminine voice asked "Did I

hear someone say trolls?" This would be Astrid, who was Hiccup's best friend. Both children were notoriously known for some loud sounds coming from the forest. This would usually come from the inventions Hiccup made. Astrid was the strong one who knew how to use weapons, Hiccup was the smart one who knew how to make them. They were the perfect pair.

"That I did Astrid." Gobber smiled brightly, glad to have another listener. "I was just telling young Hiccup here why trolls were real." Astrid looked a little skeptical, but Gobber went into his story as he worked. Hiccup did the same and listened patiently. Astrid sat in her usual chair in the corner. This chair was added soon after Hiccup joined the Forge. That way, Astrid wouldn't have to stand outside to wait for her friend, and she liked to watch the two work anyway. Gobber's rang throughout the Forge as he told the story.

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><p>"In conclusion, Trolls are real, they steal your socks, but only the left ones." Gobber concluded proudly. It was now into the afternoon and the snow was still going, but now a bit lighter, safe enough for the Viking children to play in. "What's up with that?" Hiccup asked, nose wrinkling. "No idea, now, that's enough for today Hiccup, you two go enjoy the weather and don't let the trolls get you." Gobber waved them away. The two walked outside.<p>

"Maybe we should look for some." Astrid suggested.

"Not a good idea, I went looking for some once while my dad and I went fishing once, never found any, that's when he told me they weren't real." Hiccup replied a little sadly.

The two started to build a Snow-Viking, but it looked a bit disfigured, so they turned it into a snow Troll. As they were building, they continued talking about the tale told earlier. "It does make sense, Gobber said he lost his left sock and never found it again." Astrid said in a matter-of-fact tone. Hiccup, thought for a minute, and started laughing. He laughed so hard that his face turned even redder. Astrid asked defensively why he was laughing. After he told her, she started laughing too.

They couldn't believe Gobber forgot he only had his right leg.

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